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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the importance of criteria in the evaluation of a teacher by his students and proposes a method of representing the results of the questionnaire in the form of one weighted average. The following points, emphasized in the construction of the questionnaire, are elaborated: a) the characteristics of a good teacher; b) the formulation of broad, basic, purposeful questions; and c) the opportunity for students to express their feelings. Also detailed are the objectives of the questionnaire: a) the lessening of personal bias in the evaluation process, b) the evaluation of the instructor in relation to student learning, c) the encouragement of a helpful attitude of the instructor toward his students, d) the discouragement of easy grading and minimal requirements, e) the encouragement of uniform grading, and f) the comparison of teachers in the same area. A questionnaire is included with the computation of weighted means. (BRB)

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THE TEACHER EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE QUANTIFICATION OF RESULTS

by

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This paper discusses the importance of criteria of evaluation of a teacher by his students and proposes a method of representing the results of the questionnaire in the form of one weighted average. In order to illustrate how evaluation criteria can be incorporated into various questions and how the weighting system can be applied, an actual questionnaire has been appended.

Before going into details of the above problem, it may be useful to mention that this questionnaire and a paper similar to this one were sent to a random sample of Kent State University faculty. Their answers to pertinent

SP 006 631

questions regarding the evaluation of teaching and the quality of the questionnaire were as follows:

1. Teachers should 96% should not .4% be evaluated on the quality of teaching.

2. Should the administration decide to evaluate professors on the quality of teaching, the evaluation should be done: (a) from conversations by the chairman of the department and/or the executive committee with your colleagues and students 14% ; (b) from the results of a questionnaire 17% ; (c) other (please, specify) 29% ; (d) both (a) and (b) 40% .

3. The assumptions of the enclosed paper are faulty 11% ; more-or-less correct 61% ; very adequate 28% .

4. The enclosed questionnaire is poor 12% ; good 68% ; very good 20% .

5. Do you generally agree with weights of categories and questions? Yes 79% ; No 21% .

The answers to Question 2 indicate that a sizeable proportion of the KSU faculty (not less than 47 per cent and possibly a majority) would use questionnaires as an exclusive or partial means of evaluating teaching performance.

Student evaluation of teachers has to be based on criteria that establish the fundamental qualities of a good teacher. Therefore, before accepting a particular kind of questionnaire it is first necessary to determine what a good teacher is. The problem is important.

A questionnaire that emphasizes (and rewards) pleasant relations between teacher and student may result in attempts to please students. If it becomes known that students

reward easy graders, teachers may relax their standards. If teachers are evaluated mainly by the results of admission tests for graduate study (taken by former students), then attitudes toward grading and student-teacher relations will certainly be quite different.

I would like to suggest that a good teacher should have the following characteristics:

1) In depth knowledge of the subject and therefore the ability to explain and supplement the text.
2) Good preparation.
3) A teaching method that (a) helps the student to better understand the text and the course, and (b) makes the subject more interesting and relevant.

A teacher's greatest achievement should be the student who significantly increases his knowledge of the subject matter and perhaps even becomes interested in it.

The type of questionnaire which pushes instructors toward pleasing the students at almost any price may contribute to friendly atmosphere in the college; yet this may be quite harmful to the basic purpose of a college, which is learning.

A questionnaire should be basic and broad but it should not be detailed. A detailed questionnaire implies a very narrow concept of a teacher. Yet there is little doubt that there are many ways in which good teaching can be achieved.

For example, one should not assume that only those who teach without notes or, in contrast, those who write everything on the blackboard, are good teachers. Both methods may bring good results.

In a technical sense, the purpose of a questionnaire is to elicit pertinent and objective information from the students. Therefore questions that can be widely interpreted are as bad here as in a questionnaire dealing with income or taxes. The questions should not only be clear, but their purpose should be spelled out with at least some amount of precision.

Past experience has shown that not all students evaluate teaching abilities of an instructor alone. Some of them are either mad at him or like him very much for reasons other than his teaching abilities. For this reason it seems necessary to give students an opportunity to express their feelings on such matters. As a result, the evaluation of a professor's teaching abilities may become more objective.

Finally, there is a question about just who should answer the questionnaire. All students, or only those above a certain point average? In other words, do we care about a marginal student's evaluation of an instructor? Experience shows that, in certain courses, good students give the instructor better grades than do poor students. In other courses the opposite is true and, as a result, students may reward easy grading rather than good teaching.

The questionnaire enclosed here tries to achieve the following objectives:

1) To make the student aware of a possible difference between the teacher's personal characteristics and his professional competence;
2) To diminish the importance of personal bias in the evaluation process;
3) To evaluate the instructor for his contribution to the student's learning process, that is, to find out if and to what extent the teacher helped the student to learn;
4) To encourage the instructor to have a helpful attitude toward his students;
5) To discourage attempts to gain favor with students through easy grading and minimal requirements;
6) To encourage more uniformity in grading; (There is little reason why a student can earn an A from one instructor and a C from another for the same course.)
7) To compare the teacher with other teachers in the same area, since only this kind of comparison is meaningful.

Every school may have its own ideas about the kind of teacher it wants. The enclosed questionnaire, therefore, has to be regarded as a method by which well defined objectives of teaching are either encouraged or discouraged.

The purpose of the weighting system used here is to show that a number of things may be done with it. For example, it

is not necessary to always use weights like (0, 1, 2, 3, 4). Weights like (0, 0, 2, 2, 4) or (-2, 2, 2, 4) may be equally effective. The weights have been inserted in the following questionnaire for illustration purposes. It may not be appropriate to leave the weights on a working questionnaire.

All numbers and computations also have been inserted for illustrative purposes. It should be noted that the formulation of some questions was based on other questionnaires.

TEACHER EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Question 1 below tries to determine whether you have strong feelings about the instructor for reasons other than his professional abilities. At this point evaluate your instructor as a person. You will evaluate him later as a teacher. Remember that a nice person can be a poor teacher and vice versa. Be objective in grading your teacher, just as you would expect him to be objective in grading you. If for some reason you are unable to be objective, do not fill out this questionnaire.

1. Check one:

   (A) I like the instructor very much____; (B) My attitude toward the instructor is more-or-less neutral____; (C) I dislike the instructor very much____.

Disregard statements (a) through (f) below if you checked (B). If you checked (A) or (C), respond to statements (a) through (f).

I like/dislike (cross out one) the instructor mainly for the following reasons (check more than one if pertinent):

(a) My grade is different from what I expected____.

(b) His attitude in class:

(1) Very pleasant____.

(2) Tells jokes, stories, is a good entertainer___.

(3) Very unpleasant____.

(4) Demands very little in terms of homework, class attendance and study____.

(5) Demands too much in terms of homework, class attendance, and study____.

(c) His race, religion, or national origin____.

(d) His political views____.

(e) My personal relations with the instructor____.

(f) Other (please, specify):

2. Does the instructor have any particularly bothersome habits?_____ If so, explain:

3. Demonstration of knowledge in subject area: Consider the teacher's ability to demonstrate his knowledge of the subject he is teaching. Does he show a grasp of the subject matter? Does he appear to be sufficiently

familiar with material in related subjects? Consider the manner and ease with which he talks and answers questions about it.

It appears that his knowledge of the subject is: (a) poor; (b) frequently inadequate; (c) adequate; (d) good; (e) excellent.

Check one: (a)___ (b)___ (c)___ (d) 9 (e) 7 .

Weights: 0 1 2 3 4

Mean: $\frac{9 \cdot 3 + 7 \cdot 4}{16} = 3.44$

Weight for the whole question: 10.

NOTE: The numbers in spaces (d) and (e) are the numbers of students who evaluated a teacher on Question 3. For example, the number 9 in space (d) means that 9 students thought that the instructor's knowledge of the subject is "good." Computations of survey results were inserted to illustrate the weighting method.

4. Daily preparation: Does the teacher appear to have a definite and organized plan of work set up before coming to class?

The thoroughness of his preparation is: (a) Has considerable difficulty in putting his lecture across. (b) Hesitant and uncertain. (c) Adequate preparation. (d) Well organized preparation. (e) Very fluent presentation.

Check one: (a) 1 (b) ___ (c) 2 (d) 1 (e) 12

Weights: 0 0 2 2 4

Mean: 3·38

Weight for the whole question: 4

5. The teaching ability: Question 1 dealt with the teacher as a person. This question concerns the instructor's teaching ability alone. Do not try to reward the teacher for easy grading, low course requirements, or the quality of his jokes. Do not try to punish him for your own shortcomings, especially for a possible discrepancy between your and the instructor's idea about your ability and performance.

(a) The instructor did not elaborate the subject matter. He wasn't even helpful in explaining the textbook. I would have gained this knowledge without attending the classes. (b) The instructor has a rather limited ability to present the subject matter and explain the text. (c) The instructor's teaching ability is average. (d) The instructor was able to make me understand the subject and the purpose of the course. (e) Attending this class was very rewarding; I learned much more than I expected. It would have been very difficult for me to learn all this without attending class.

Check one: (a) 1 (b) 3 (c) 4 (d) 7 (e) 1 .

Weights: 0 1 2 3 4

Mean: 2.25

Weight for the whole question: 19

6. Level of the course: Almost every course can be made either very easy or so demanding that the student has to spend on it disproportionately great amount of time at the expense of other courses. The course can also be made difficult by disregarding the students' level of preparation. This course is: (a) ridiculously easy; (b) a little too easy for a college course; (c) unfairly demanding; (d) more or less right.

Check one: (a) 2 (b) 2 (c) 2 (d) 10

Weights: -2 2 2 4

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{(-2)2 + 2 \cdot 2 + 2 \cdot 2 + 4 \cdot 10}{16}$$

$$= 2.75$$

Weight for the whole question: 8.

7. Examinations grading is: (a) Unjust and arbitrary. (b) I suspect the teacher wants to gain student favor by easy grading. (c) Grading is much too tough. It is out of step with grading done by other teachers. (d) Grading is too easy. (e) Grading is more-or-less fair.

Check one: (a) 1 (b) ___ (c) 2 (d) 1 (e) 12

Weights: 0 0 2 2 4

Mean: 3.38

Weight for the whole question: 4.

8. Reaction to student requests for help in learning process.

The instructor: (a) very often refuses to answer questions on subject matter and/or the organization of the course; (b) answers questions seldom and reluctantly; (c) shows average interest in student quests for help; (d) helps and answers questions readily; (e) is inviting, helpful, and patient in trying to help students with difficult problems.

Check one: (a)___ (b)___ (c)1 (d)13 (e)2

Weights: 0 1 2 3 4

Mean: 3.06

Weight for the whole question: 5.

9. Control of class: In a well controlled class the instructor maintains confidence and respect, holds students' interest and attention, and guides the discussion ~~into relevant phases~~. On this basis the instructor's control of the class is: (a) Consistently lacks control. (b) Fair control. (c) Satisfactory control. (d) High degree of control. (e) Excellent control.

Check one: (a)___ (b)1 (c)4 (d)3 (e)8

Weights: 0 1 2 3 4

Mean: 3.12

Weight for the whole question: 2.

10. The comparison of your instructor with other instructors: There are courses in which the majority of students are interested. In other cases the student takes a course

not out of curiosity, but because it is required. Also, the level of difficulty may be quite different. As a result the teaching of the course and the reaction of students may be affected correspondingly. It is, therefore, necessary to compare your instructor with instructors in similar areas. If you are a freshman, compare your instructor with high school teachers.

How does the instructor compare with other instructors teaching in similar areas of study? (a) Poor. (b) Below average. (c) Average. (d) Above average. (e) Outstanding.

Check one: (a)___ (b)_1_ (c)_2_ (d)_8_ (e)_4_

Weights: 0 1 2 3 4

Mean: 3.00

Weight for the whole question: 22.

The computation of weighted mean of means:

Q	$\bar{X}_i$	w_i	$\bar{X}_i w_i$
3	3.44	10	34.4
4	3.13	10	31.3
5	2.25	19	42.8
6	2.75	8	22.0
7	3.38	4	13.5
8	3.06	5	15.3
9	3.12	2	6.2
10	3.00	22	66.0
		80	231.5

The mean of means is: 231.5/80 = 2.89.

Your grade point average is: 2.5 or higher___; less than 2.5___. You expected to receive a grade of

A B C D F (circle one) in this course, but the grade you actually are getting is A B C D F (circle one).